

Cattle are a common sight along West Virginia's country roads. Did you ever wonder how many are actually in this state? Or how many acres of farmland we have here? The answers to these and many other questions are contained in the book you are now holding, the 2006 Agricultural Statistics Bulletin, produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service-West Virginia Field Office.

Each year, Agricultural Statistics Director Dale King and his staff gather extensive data about farming in West Virginia. This information is vital to state and national decision-makers who set agricultural policy and provide programs that benefit our farmers and, therefore, all of us.

In the coming year, the Field Office staff will be hard at work on the Census of Agriculture, an even more in-depth accounting that is published every five years. If you are farmer, regardless of the size of your operation, please take the time to complete the NASS questionnaire. If you haven't received questionnaires in the past, contact the West Virginia Field Office and let them know you're proud of the work you do and you want to be counted. Contact information can be found elsewhere in this booklet.

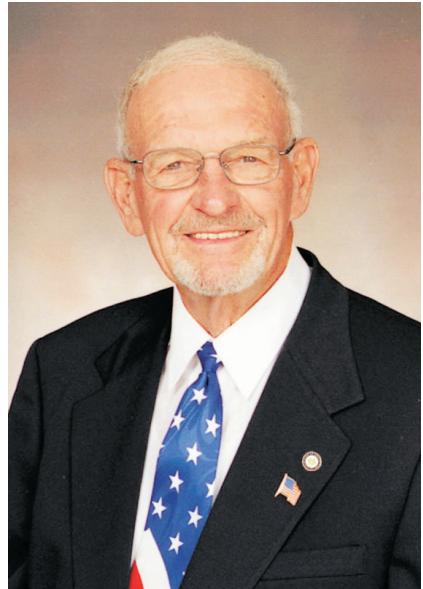
Agriculture is often taken for granted in this country because the hard work and ingenuity of our farmers has created a stable, plentiful and affordable food supply that has seldom, if ever, been at issue. However, agriculture is one of the pillars of America's strength as a nation. The surplus of food generated each year is a strong incentive in foreign policy discussions, and the countless tons of food we donate to countries around the globe are evidence of our generosity and goodwill as a people.

Although a small state in population, West Virginia plays a substantial role in the agricultural output of our nation. I hope this publication gives you a better idea of the magnitude of agriculture here in the Mountain State.

Sincerely,



Gus R. Douglass
Commissioner of Agriculture



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